

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A substrate processing apparatus, comprising:

a carrier block including a carrier placement portion to/from which a substrate carrier storing a plurality of substrates is loaded/unloaded, and first transfer means for performing delivery of the substrate with respect to the substrate carrier placed on the carrier placement portion;

a transfer block comprising second transfer means provided adjacent to the carrier block and for transferring the substrate along a linear transfer path, said transfer block including at least one utility unit including a plurality of connection ends for supplying utilities external to the at least one utility unit;

a first delivery stage configured to perform delivery of the substrate between said first transfer means and said second transfer means;

a plurality of process blocks arranged along said transfer path, each process block freely attaching to the transfer block by pressing against the transfer block, each process block freely detaching from the transfer block by pulling away from the transfer block, each process block including at least one connection end to connect to a connection end of the at least one utility unit by pressing against the connection end of the at least one utility unit to receive utilities from the transfer block; and

an interface portion located between said transfer path and a light exposure machine;

each process block including a chemical unit storing tanks of chemical solutions, a utility unit having connection ends configured to supply utilities, a liquid process unit having a coating unit configured to apply a resist solution to the substrate and a developing unit configured to perform developing processing on the substrate after exposure to light, a heating unit configured to heat the substrate, third transfer means for transferring the

substrate between the units, and a second delivery stage configured to perform delivery of the substrate between said second transfer means and said third transfer means,

said transfer path extending from said interface portion to said carrier block, with said plurality of process blocks arranged on only one side of said transfer path, and each of said plurality of process blocks performing same processing, and

application of the resist solution and development after exposure to light being performed on the substrate in the units of the respective process blocks,

wherein the at least one utility unit comprises freely attachable/detachable connections,

the process block includes a process-block-side connection end of a first utility line for city water, a chemical solution and gas, and a process-block-side connection end of a second utility line for an electric supply line and a signal line,

the transfer block includes a transfer-block-side connection end of the first utility line for city water, a chemical solution and gas, and a transfer-block-side connection end of the second utility line for an electric supply line and a signal line,

a first connection portion connecting the process-block-side connection end of the first utility line to the transfer-block-side connection end of the first utility line,

a second connection portion connecting the process-block-side connection end of the second utility line to the transfer-block-side connection end of the second utility line,

said first connection portion only coupling fluids,

said second connection portion only coupling electrical data and power, and

the first connection portion attached to the process block via a first attachment separate from and not directly connected to a second attachment attaching the second connection portion to the process block.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein an interface portion to which a light exposure device is connected is connected to a side of said transfer path opposite to a side connected to the carrier block.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein an interface portion to which a light exposure device is connected is connected to a side of said transfer path opposite to a side connected to the process blocks.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A substrate processing apparatus, comprising:
a carrier block including a carrier placement portion to/from which a substrate carrier storing a plurality of substrates is loaded/unloaded, and first transfer means for performing delivery of the substrate with respect to the substrate carrier placed on the carrier placement portion;

a transfer block comprising second transfer means provided adjacent to the carrier block and for transferring the substrate along a linear transfer path, said transfer block including at least one utility unit including a plurality of connection ends for supplying utilities external to the at least one utility unit;

a first delivery stage configured to perform delivery of the substrate between said first transfer means and said second transfer means;

a plurality of process blocks arranged along said transfer path, each process block freely attaching to the transfer block by pressing against the transfer block, each process block freely detaching from the transfer block by pulling away from the transfer block, each process block including at least one connection end to connect to a connection end of the at

least one utility unit by pressing against the connection end of the at least one utility unit to receive utilities from the transfer block; and

an interface portion located between said transfer path and a light exposure machine;

each process block including a chemical unit storing tanks of chemical solutions, a utility unit having connection ends configured to supply utilities, a liquid process unit having a coating unit configured to apply a resist solution to the substrate and a developing unit configured to perform developing processing on the substrate after exposure to light, a heating unit configured to heat the substrate, third transfer means for transferring the substrate between the units, and a second delivery stage configured to perform delivery of the substrate between said second transfer means and said third transfer means,

said transfer path extending from said interface portion to said carrier block, with said plurality of process blocks arranged on only one side of said transfer path, and each of said plurality of process blocks performing same processing, and

application of the resist solution and development after exposure to light being performed on the substrate in units of the respective process blocks,

wherein the at least one utility unit comprises freely attachable/detachable connections,

the process block includes a process-block-side connection end of a first utility line for city water, a chemical solution and gas, and a process-block-side connection end of a second utility line for an electric supply line and a signal line,

the transfer block includes a transfer-block-side connection end of the first utility line for city water, a chemical solution and gas, and a transfer-block-side connection end of the second utility line for an electric supply line and a signal line,

a first connection portion connecting the process-block-side connection end of the first utility line to the transfer-block-side connection end of the first utility line,

a second connection portion connecting the process-block-side connection end of the second utility line to the transfer-block-side connection end of the second utility line,
said first connection portion only coupling fluids,
said second connection portion only coupling electrical data and power, and
the first connection portion attached to the process block via a first attachment separate from and not directly connected to a second attachment attaching the second connection portion to the process block.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said liquid process unit is for forming a coating film.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said liquid process unit is for applying a chemical solution including a precursor of an insulating film to the substrate.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said plurality of process blocks are formed to have a same size in two dimensions.

Claim 8 (Canceled).

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said carrier block is capable of rotating about a rotation shaft provided at an end portion of said transfer block.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said process block is attached to said transfer block via a hinge, and rotated about said hinge to be positioned in place.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 4, comprising a positioning member provided at a bottom portion or a side portion of a region where said process block is to be arranged, for use in positioning said process block.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 4, comprising a guide member provided at a bottom portion or a side portion of a region where said process block is to be arranged, for use in drawing the process block, and a positioning member provided for positioning the process block to the guide member.

Claim 13 (Canceled).

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein each process block includes a plurality of connection to connect to connection ends of the transfer block by pressing against the connection ends of the transfer block, and wherein the connection ends of each process block are connected to a plurality of utility lines of each process block, and further wherein said plurality of utility lines supply utilities different from each other, and each of the plurality of utility lines is branched on a downstream side to be guided to the respective process units.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the plurality of utility lines include a supply line of liquid for temperature regulation, a supply line of inactive gas, an electric supply line, and a signal line.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the plurality of connection ends include a first connection end on an external side which is provided at a lower side of the transfer block, and wherein the first connection end is configured such that when the process block is pressed to the transfer block, the first connection end on the external side is connected to a connection end on the process block side.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the utility lines further include a chemical solution supply tube.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the at least one connection end of each process block includes a plurality of connection ends respectively connectable to connection ends of the transfer block for supplying a plurality of different utilities from the transfer block to each of the process blocks.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the at least one connection end of each process block includes a plurality of connection ends respectively connectable to connection ends of the transfer block for supplying a plurality of different utilities from the transfer block to each of the process blocks.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): A substrate processing apparatus, comprising:

a carrier block including a carrier placement portion to/from which a substrate carrier storing a plurality of substrates is loaded/unloaded, and a first transfer apparatus configured to deliver substrates with respect to the substrate carrier placed on the carrier placement portion;

at transfer block, said transfer block comprising a second transfer apparatus configured to carry substrates along a transfer path, the transfer block further including a plurality of process block receiving sites, and wherein a utilities connection site is associated with each of said plurality of process block receiving sites, each utilities connection site including a plurality of connection ends for supplying a plurality of different utilities external to the transfer block;

at least one process block arranged along said transfer path, the at least one process block attaching to the transfer block at one of the process block receiving sites by pressing the process block against the process block receiving site, said process block including a utilities connection site which connects to a utilities connection site of the transfer block by pressing against the utilities connection site, wherein the utilities connection site of the process block includes a plurality of connection ends for receiving a plurality of different utilities from the connection ends of a utilities site of the transfer block;

wherein each process block includes a plurality of process units configured to perform a resist application process and a developing process, said process block further including a third transfer apparatus configured to transfer wafers within the process block, said plurality of process units including a chemical unit storing tanks of chemical solutions, a utility unit having connection ends configured to supply utilities, a liquid process unit having a coating unit configured to apply a resist solution to the substrate and a developing unit configured to

perform developing processing on the substrate after exposure to light, the application of the resist solution and development after exposure to light being performed on the substrate in the plurality of units of the respective process blocks; and

wherein said transfer path extends from said carrier block and along each of the plurality of process block receiving sites,

wherein the at least one utility unit comprises freely attachable/detachable connections,

the process block includes a process-block-side connection end of a first utility line for city water, a chemical solution and gas, and a process-block-side connection end of a second utility line for an electric supply line and a signal line,

the transfer block includes a transfer-block-side connection end of the first utility line for city water, a chemical solution and gas, and a transfer-block-side connection end of the second utility line for an electric supply line and a signal line,

a first connection portion connecting the process-block-side connection end of the first utility line to the transfer-block-side connection end of the first utility line,

a second connection portion connecting the process-block-side connection end of the second utility line to the transfer-block-side connection end of the second utility line,

said first connection portion only coupling fluids,

said second connection portion only coupling electrical data and power, and

the first connection portion attached to the process block via a first attachment separate from and not directly connected to a second attachment attaching the second connection portion to the process block.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus of claim 20, wherein said carrier block is movably mounted to said transfer block such that the carrier

block is movable between an operational position and a non-operational position, and wherein in said non-operational position additional space is provided at least one of the process block receiving sites to facilitate attachment and detachment of a process block to the transfer block.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus of claim 20, wherein the process block includes at least one resist application unit, at least one developing unit, and at least one heating unit; and

wherein said plurality of connection ends of transfer block include at least one connection end for supplying electricity from the transfer block to the process block, at least one liquid supply connection end for supplying a liquid from the transfer block to the process block, and at least one signal connection end for providing a signal from the transfer block to the process block.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus of claim 22, further including a guide associated with each of the process block receiving sites, and wherein the utilities connection sites and the guides are configured such that as a process block is guided toward and urged against the transfer block, one of the utilities connection sites of the transfer block is connected to the utilities connection site of the process block.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the transfer block includes a guide rail extending underneath the process block; and

said process block is moveable along a path of the guide rail to connect the at least one connection end of the process block to the connection end of the at least one utility unit of the transfer block.

Claim 25 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein:

the transfer block includes a guide rail extending underneath the process block; and
said process block is moveable along a path of the guide rail to connect the at least one connection end of the process block to the connection end of the at least one utility unit of the transfer block.

Claim 26 (Previously Presented): The substrate processing apparatus of claim 20, wherein:

the transfer block includes a guide rail extending underneath the process block; and
said process block is moveable along a path of the guide rail to connect the at least one connection end of the process block to the connection end of the at least one utility unit of the transfer block.

Claim 27 (New). A method of configuring a substrate processing apparatus including a carrier block, a transfer block, a delivery stage, and a plurality of process blocks having at least one utility unit with freely attachable/detachable connections, the method comprising:

installing at a time of installation a first set of the process blocks connected to the transfer block by way of the freely attachable/detachable connections; and

upon a case of increasing a quantity of items to be processed in the substrate processing apparatus, installing a second set of the process blocks connected to the transfer block by way of the freely attachable/detachable connections.